



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
August 17, 2006

Statement on the Terrorist Surveillance Program

Last week America and the world received a stark reminder that terrorists are still plotting to attack our country and kill innocent people. Today a federal judge in Michigan has ruled that the Terrorist Surveillance Program ordered by the President to detect and prevent terrorist attacks against the American people is unconstitutional and otherwise illegal. We couldn't disagree more with this ruling, and the Justice Department will seek an immediate stay of the opinion and appeal. Until the Court has the opportunity to rule on a stay of the Court's ruling in a hearing now set for September 7, 2006, the parties have agreed that enforcement of the ruling will be stayed.

United States intelligence officials have confirmed that the program has helped stop terrorist attacks and saved American lives. The program is carefully administered, and only targets international phone calls coming into or out of the United States where one of the parties on the call is a suspected Al Qaeda or affiliated terrorist. The whole point is to detect and prevent terrorist attacks before they can be carried out. That's what the American people expect from their government, and it is the President's most solemn duty to ensure their protection.

The Terrorist Surveillance Program is firmly grounded in law and regularly reviewed to make sure steps are taken to protect civil liberties. The Terrorist Surveillance Program has proven to be one of our most critical and effective tools in the war against terrorism, and we look forward to demonstrating on appeal the validity of this vital program.

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